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## LOLARKAKUNDA INSCRIPTION OF KING PRANANARAYANA OF KOCH-BEHAR.

(BY JOGENDRA CHANDRA GHOSH.)

Sometime ago Mr. Amalananda Ghosh published an inscription of an unknown dynasty and of an unknown era, in the *Indian Culture* (vol. II. pp. 146-48). It was found at the Lolārkakunḍa, Benares. Therein he spoke of another inscription still lying there unpublished. We pointed out in this *Journal* (vol. IV. pp. 96-98) that this dynasty is none other than the Koch Kings of Koch-Bihar, Bengal, and that the unknown era used is the Koch era, commencing in 1509. 10 A.D. Mr. Ghosh was requested to publish the other inscription also. A few months ago, we met Mr. Ghosh accidentally here in Calcutta and repeated our request. Agreeably to this, he has very kindly supplied us with the following reading of it, with notes of correction. We are responsible for the conjectural emendations only, as shown in brackets.

The inscription says that the Sun-like King Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa shone in his own effulgence. By him the Lolārkakunḍa was endowed with gifts of many houses. His son was wise and valiant Vīranārāyaṇa. His son again is the full moon like King Prāṇanārāyaṇa. This temple was constructed by that wise *Mahārājā*, by whom also the Lolārkakunḍa was beautified in many ways. In the Śaka year of three times the five-hundred, augmented by ten ( Ś. 1510-1588 A.D. ), the best of the Kings of Bihar country caused this wonderful jewel of a house, in the city of the lord of the worlds (Benares). Let his eternal fame spread ( far and wide ).

We are indebted to Khan Chaudhuri Amanatullah Ahmad of Koch-Bihar, the author of the *History of Koch-Bihar*, in Bengali, recently published by the Koch-Bihar *Darbar*, for the information of the relations these three Kings bear to

each other and their approximate reign periods, as given below :—

1. Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa ... .. 1587-1627 A.D.
2. Vīranārāyaṇa (son of No. 1) 1627-1632 „
3. Prāṇanārāyaṇa (son of No. 2) 1632-1665 „

The date, at first sight, would seem to have belonged to the last mentioned King Prāṇanārāyaṇa, but the reign periods given above show that it was the date of the original work done by the King Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. It is doubtful if the King Prāṇanārāyaṇa did anything else than setting up the inscription, to commemorate the work of merit of his grandfather. The *maṇḍapa* seems to be the same structure as the *Veśma-ratna*, so he can not be the author of the *maṇḍapa*. It appears from the expression *maṇḍapo'-yam* that the inscription originally was set up in it. Mr. Ghosh has found it on a resting *Verandah* in the north-eastern corner of the well. We do not know if the *Verandah* belongs to the *maṇḍapa*. Kṛan Chandrahuri says that the King Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa discovered the Kuṇḍa sometime between 1615 and 1618 A. D. But it is not supported by the inscription. We hope he will clear up these points raised.

लक्ष्मीनारायणो राजा [कस] मासीत स्वमासयः (?) (या) ।

जेनः लोलार्ककुण्ड वै बहुधा मानवन्धनैः (?) (बहुधामनिबन्धनैः) ॥

तस्य त्मजो<sup>१</sup> बीरबरो बीरनारायणः कृती ।

तस्य [तनयो र ] केब प्राण नारायणो नृपः ॥

मण्डपोयं कृतस्तेन महाराजेन धीमता ।

जेन<sup>२</sup> लोलार्ककुण्डोपि बहुधा बिमलीकृतः ॥

साके<sup>३</sup> त्रिपञ्चसत<sup>४</sup> [ब] र्ध (?) (र्ध) दशौत्तरे श्रीविश्वेश्वरस्य नगरी [तल] बेस्मरत्नं<sup>५</sup> ।

चित्रचकार धरणीन्द्रबरो बिहारदेशस्य यस्य [सत] ताम [हिमा तनोतु] ॥

(1) Read सीत् (2) Read येन (3) Read तस्यात्मजो (4) Read येन

(5) „ शाके (6) „ शत (7) „ वेद्य

## MIRZA NATHAN'S NARRATIVE.

( BY K. L. BARUA. )

Bāhāristān-i-Ghaybi is the name of Mirza Nathan's narrative of the Moghul wars, during the reigns of Jehangir and Shah Jehan, with the chieftains of Bengal and Sylhet, the *Mags* and the *Feringis* of Chittagong, the Rajas of Orissa and Cachar, Raja Parikhitrāyān the king of the Eastern Koch Kingdom, Raja Baldeb alias Dharmanārāyan of Darrung, the Koch leaders of Goalpara and Kamrup, the petty chiefs of the *Dakhinul* in Kamrup, and the Ahom Kings. This narrative, translated from the original Persian by Dr. M. I. Borah, M.A., PH.D (Lond.), of the Dacca University, has been published, at the expense of the Government of Assam, by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies. Students of history will therefore ever remain grateful to the Government of Assam for making this narrative, of the early part of the seventeenth century, available to them particularly as it is more than a mere diary of the military operations conducted by the Imperial forces of which the writer, Mirza Nathan ( latterly known as Shitab Khan ) was himself one of the distinguished generals.\*

This narrative gives us a more or less detailed description of the political condition of Central, Eastern and Southern Bengal, Sylhet and Cachar, Koch-Bihar and Kamrup during the period ( 1608-1624 A.D. ) as well as valuable side-lights on the system of Moghul administration in the provinces, the system of warfare carried on at that time, the system of transport, the social condition of the Moghul and Pathan nobles and the Hindu

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\* As a matter of fact, more than half of the narrative deals with the warfare in Eastern and Northern Bengal and as such it should have been published at the expense of the Government of Bengal.—K. L. B.

Zemindars of Bengal, the degree of authority exercised by the Emperor over the Governors of the provinces and that exercised by the Governor over the feudal lords whether they were Moghuls, Turks, Persians, Pathans or Hindus. It vividly portrays the disintegration of the powerful Koch Kingdom, as a result of the fratricidal quarrel between the two Houses of Koch-Bihar and Koch-Hajo and the steady growth of the Ahom power in the East which ultimately banished both Koch and Moghul authority from Kāmrup as far west as the river Manas which, in spite of two subsequent expeditions led by Mir Jumla and Raja Rāmsingh, continued to be the western boundary of the Ahom kingdom till the last.

The narrative begins with the appointment of Islam Khan as the Subadar of Bengal after the death of Jahangir Quli Khan. It was on the suggestion of Islam Khan that Ihtiman Khan, the father of Mirza Nathan, was sent by Emperor Jehangir to Bengal as the "Chief officer of the fleet and the artillery". The name of this post was "Mir Bahr" or Admiral. He was ordered to take back to Bengal all the artillery that Raja Mān Singh had taken from Bengal and Rohtas as well as the cannons which the widow of Jahangir Quli Khan had removed. Accordingly he first proceeded to Allahabad where Rani Gaur,<sup>(1)</sup> the wife of Raja Mān Sing, was living. He obtained there 330 pieces of cannon and took them with his fleet down the river Ganges. After his arrival in Bengal he was granted *Jagirs* which consisted of certain *pergunnas* round about Burdwan and Midnapur "in lieu of the salaries of his men" and twenty two mahals in *Bhati* (Eastern Bengal) and Ghoraghat as his personal *Jagir* or fief.

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(1) According to Dr. Borah R a n i Gour was the Koch-Bihar princess married to Raja Mān Singh. In the "Koch-Biharer Itihās," by Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, it is stated that Raja Lakshminārāyan's sister Prabhāvatī was married to Raja Mān Singh in 1596 A. D. and that when Raja Mān Singh died in 1614 A. D. she observed *sutee*.—K. L. B.

It appears therefore that each military officer of high rank whether of Moghul, Persian, Afghan or Rajput extraction, had to maintain a certain land force or naval force paid out of the *Jagir* granted for this purpose. Some of the Hindu and Muslim chieftains of Bengal, who were brought under subjection, were similarly required to serve under the Imperial Command with infantry, cavalry, navy, elephant corps or artillery maintained by them. The Hindu Zamindars of Bengal mostly assisted with war-boats, manned by their own men, but some of them had with them picked bodies of Pathan levies acting as their body-guards.

This system of military organisation did not therefore tend to the maintenance of perfect discipline. The soldiers were attached to their own Commanders who recruited them and paid them. The Subadar had therefore to deal with these powerful military leaders with a good deal of caution. Sometimes he had to invoke the name and authority of the Emperor but often the rivalries amongst the nobles themselves provided the safety of the power and prestige of the Subadar. There were instances of individual nobles becoming refractory and being crushed with the assistance of others.

The whole country was not however divided into fiefs. Imperial revenues were derived from large areas over which were appointed rent-officers, called *Karoris* who prepared rent-rolls of the various pergunnas and collected rents. After the death of Parikhitrāyān at Allahabad, Ibrahim Karori (the Buranjis call him Birahi n) divided the Eastern Koch Kingdom or Koch-Hajo into four main *Sarkārs*, viz., Sarkar Kamrup, Sarkar Dhekeri, Sarkar Dakhinkul and Sarkar Bangālbum. There were 41 mahals or pergunnas within Sarkar Kamrup, 19 within Sarkar Dhekeri, 8 within Sarkar Dakhinkul and 7 within Sarkar Bangālbum. Each Perganna was divided into *tapas*. The whole of Parikhitrāyān's kingdom was thus divided into 75 mahals or pergunnas. The westernmost division, known

as Sarkar Bangālbhum, included the pergannas of Bahirbund, Bhitarbund, Gayabari, Baritola, Sherpur, Dahkaunia and Badar. <sup>(2)</sup> This shows how the Moghuls divided a province into various revenue divisions and subdivisions.

The narrative shows that the most determined resistance in Bengal was offered by Musa Khan son of Isa Khan and Usman of Bukainagar, in Mymensing, whose influence or authority extended over a large part of the present district of Sylhet. It was not in Eastern Bengal or *Bhati* but in the present Maulvi Bazar subdivision of the Sylhet district that the most sanguinary battle was fought in which Usman himself was killed and several leading Imperial Commanders fell. After the death of Usman, Bayizid of Sylhet and the Raja of Cachar submitted without much resistance. Islam Khan then turned his attention to Raja Pratāpāditya of Jessore who, as pointed out by Dr. Borah, was certainly not the leader of the Bengal Chiefs' struggle for independence. According to Mirza Nathan's account Pratāpāditya himself came and met Islam Khan at a place called Shahpur on the bank of the Attrai river. Then the following covenant was reached between Islam Khan and Pratāpāditya: Immediately after return to his territories Pratāpāditya should send his son Sangrāmāditya with 400 war-boats to join the Imperial fleet and stay with Ihtimam Khan. The Raja himself, at the time of Islam Khan's expedition to *Bhati*, should come to fight against Musa Khan and other Zamindars with twenty thousand infantry, five hundred war-boats, including those of his son, and 1000 maunds of gun-powder. The Raja was confirmed in prosession of all his territories and moreover the two districts of Sripur and Vikrampur were given to him as *Jagir* in lieu of his allowance. He was also presented with a robe of honour, a sword, a bejewelled sword-belt, a bejewelled camphor-stand, five high-bred Irāqui horses, one male elephant, two female elephants and an imperial kettle-

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(2) Kamrupar Buranji pp 27-29.



d r u m . With these he returned to Jessore but did not send his son to join the Imperial fleet as contracted nor did he afterwards come to join Islam Khan in his march upon *Bhati*. The fact that Islam Khan asked him to assist the Imperial forces with twenty thousand infantry, five hundred war-boats and one thousand maunds of gun-powder, is alone sufficient to prove that he was one of the most important and powerful chieftains of Bengal. He did not help Musa Khan or Usman at least openly but he remained secure within his own territories believing that Islam Khan would be held at bay by the Afghan chiefs for a very long time. When however he saw the Moghuls victorious he got alarmed and sent his son to Islam Khan with the present of 80 war-boats. It was however too late. Islam Khan ordered destruction of the war-boats sent by the Raja and despatched a strong force against him under Ghyas Khan. Mirza Nathan himself was one of the commanders in the expedition under Ghyas Khan. Finding that hostilities were inevitable Pratāpāditya sent his eldest son Udayāditya with 40 hooped elephants, 1,000 horse-men and 500 war-boats, under the command of a Afghan named Kamal, to oppose the Moghuls. A sharp encounter took place near Salka during which Kamal was killed whereupon Udayāditya fled pursued by the Imperialists. Pratāpāditya then himself came out and resisted the Moghul advance. He built a strong fort which he occupied with a large army and elephants and in which he mounted a large cannon. Shots from this cannon delayed the advance of the Imperialists but at length Nathan occupied the fort though losing a large number of men in killed and wounded. After this, Pratāpāditya surrendered himself to Ghyas Khan who took him to Dacca where Islam Khan imprisoned him.

This is the account of Raja Pratāpāditya as given by the Mirza which does not make him a great hero though he and his son no doubt fought against the Imperial forces and did not submit without a fight. Perhaps more determined resis-

tance, distinguished by personal bravery, was given by Madhab Rai, Zamindar of Khalsi and Binod Rai, Zamindar of Chand Pratap. A son of Madhab Rai and a brother of Binod Rai were killed in battle.

Of the Hindu chieftains of Bengal doing military service under the Imperial banner and mentioned in this narrative the names of Raja Raghunath of Soosung, in Mymensing, and Raja Sattrajit of Bhusima, in Faridpur, are prominent. These two Rajas, particularly the former, submitted to the Imperialists without any resistance. They were present in nearly all the expeditions chronicled by the Mirza. Raja Raghunath actually did not belong to *Bhati* or even to Bengal. His territories were within the borders of the Koch Kingdom of Kamrup. He had to seek the protection of the Moghuls to save himself from the fury of Raja Parikhitinārāyan, of the Eastern Koch Kingdom, who had imprisoned his family at Ghila Bijaypur. When Islam Khan was at Ghoraghat, during the rainy season he sent envoys to Raja Lakshminārāyan of "Kāmta" and to his nephew Raja Parikhitinārāyan of "Kamrup". The former, through the mediation of Raja Raghunath, sent a suitable *peskash* to Islam Khan but Raja Parikhit sent no reply to Islam Khan who, without being aware of the strength of Parikhit, despatched an army against him under the command of Abdul Wahid. Parikhit easily defeated this force and Abdul Wahid fled to Fathpur.<sup>(3)</sup> Islam Khan then promised to Raja Raghunath that he would humble Raja Parikhit after subjugating the Afghan Chiefs of Bhati and thus utilized Raja Raghunath's assistance in the operations in Eastern Bengal, Sylhet and Cachar. There

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(3) In the book called "Moghul North-east Frontier Policy", which bristles with inaccurate statements, it is related, evidently on the basis of this narrative, that Parikhit was defeated by the Imperialist Officer, Abdul Wahid. The fact is that the author of this book relied upon an incorrect translation of the Mirza's narrative.—  
K. L. B.

is no doubt that Raja Raghunath co-operated whole-heartedly with the imperialists as he was thirsting for vengeance on Raja Parikhitnārāyan. In the arrangement of transport and in mediation between the Imperialist Commanders and the independent chiefs his services were most valuable.

Raja Sattrajit, son of Raja Mukunda of Bhusana, also served in several campaigns in Eastern Bengal, Sylhet, Kamrup and Assam, but his services in the campaigns against the Assamese were the most prominent. He first came to Assam with the large host which Islam Khan sent against Raja Parikhit under the command of Makram Khan. It appears from Mirza Nathan's account that this host included not only Imperialist forces but also the combined forces of nearly all the vanquished chieftains of Eastern Bengal and Sylhet with their boats, artillery and elephants. It is stated that, apart from the elephants of the various chiefs, the Imperial forces alone included three hundred war-elephants besides five thousand matchlock-men. After the surrender of Raja Parikhit Islam Khan decided to conquer the Ahom Kingdom also and sent Syed Ābā Bākr with an additional force for the purpose. Raja Sattrajit was ordered to join this expeditionary force which included several other Bengali Hindu Zamindars as well as Rajput leaders with their soldiers such as Raja Jagdev, grandson of Raja Todarmal and Lachmi Rajput, nephew of Bahadur Gurah.

Ābā Bākr had despatched some spies, ahead of his advance, in order to gather information. These spies, in the guise of traders, began to purchase Agar-wood. The Assamese patrols seized some of their boats, killed the men and took away the Agar-wood. Those who escaped related the story to Ābā Bākr who thereupon ordered Raja Sattrajit to advance with his fleet up the river Kallang from Kajalinukh. He did so and on his approach the few Assamese patrol-boats dispersed. The Raja thus reached Sala unopposed, sacked the Ahom fort there

and, crossing over to Bishwanath, carried away two dancing girls from the Śiva temple of that place. He then rejoined the main army at Ābā Bākr. When the Ahom King, Pratap Singha, came to know of this he became very much enraged and said :—" The Bangāls have kidnapped two dancing girls from the centre of my kingdom. Can there be greater insult than this ? "(4) The Ahom King then worshipped the river Brahmaputra by throwing into the water one earthen-pot full of gold and another full of silver and prayed that if he can not defeat the invaders his life may not be spared.(5) He then gathered a very strong force which included, according to the Mirza 700 war-elephants and " three hundred thousand dexterous and bold infantry ". According to the Buranjis however the elephants numbered only 120. The Mirza was not present in the battle as he did not form of part Aba Bakr's expedition and hence his account, which he must have compiled from the story of the fugitives rescued by him, may be a bit exaggerated. According to the Mirza the Assamese launched a night attack "two or three gharis before morning" but according to the Buranjis it was just at daybreak that the elephants, advancing in front of the Assamese infantry, broke the Moghul forts and simultaneously the soldiers fell upon the Imperialists who were then hardly ready for the battle. The Mirza writes, " They (Assamese) began to fight and one by one, they reached the camp of Sayid Aba Bakr and attempted to enter his tent when Sayid Aba Bakr awoke from his slumber of negligence and arrogance and ran out with bare head and feet and sank in the lane of non-entity before the enemy could recognise that he was the Sardar. In this way every camp they visited was destroyed. At this

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(4) Purani Assam Buranji, p. 83. All foreigners coming from the direction of Bengal were called *Bangal*.—(K. L. B.)

(5) *Ibid*.

juncture Sayid Hakim and Sayid Kasu (6), informed of it, armed themselves and ran to the help of Aba Bakr with proper re-inforcements. But finding the situation to be different they took their stand outside the fort arraying the army. Allah Khan Dakhini, Jamal Khan Mangli and Lachmi Rajput came out of the fort, one after the other, with a few men and joined Sayid Hakim and Sayid Kasu. But the arsenal was already destroyed and the elephants were seized." In the meantime the Imperial naval force also sustained a crushing defeat. In regard to the Imperial losses in the battle the Mirza gives the following account :—" About seventeen hundred men were killed consisting of the martyrs as well as those who sank in the lane of non-entity through cowardice. The group of men who escaped from the field of battle with two or three wounds and died in the adjoined places, will be double of this number and nine thousand men were taken as prisoners. About three thousand men came out half-dead and kept themselves coucealed in the jungles and deserts and tried to escape. The Assamese having obtained such a big victory took the captives to their Raja. Of the Zamindars of Bengal, Raja Rai and Narsingh Rai, who were at the head of their boats, received two or three wounds and fell alive into the hands of the men of the fleet of the Raja of Assam". From the Mirza's narrative it appears that Raja Satrajit escaped with three wounds whēn the battle was in progress and overtook one of his fleeing boats but his son was captured by the Assamese who subsequently took him to the Kāmākhyā temple where he was sacrificed before the Goddess (7). According to the Purani Assam Buranji, the

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(6) Sayid Hakim and Sayid Kasu with " more than four hundred horses and a large infantry " were sent by the Subadar to the assistance of Sayid Aba Bakr and they reached the Moghul camp just a day or two prior to the battle. It is said that they were not received by Sayid Aba Baka properly and hence they camped outside the fort.

(7) Gait's History of Assam (Second Edition) p. 108. Evidently this was considered as adequate punishment for the kidnapping of two *Devadāsīs* from the Bishnath temple by the Raja.

Imperialist Commanders killed included Sayid Aba Bakr, Jahir Beg, Mirza Makhi, Jamal Khan, Hand Khan and Gokul Chand but Raja Jagdev (Grand-son of Raja Todar Mal), Gandharva Rai, Raja Rai, Narsing Rai, Indramani, Bhagavan Baksi, Kala Raja and Hada Pratapsing were spared as they surrendered, each holding a blade of grass between the teeth. This took place in 1616 A. D. (8). Many years after, Mir Jumla, after occupying the Ahom capital, rescued Raja Jagdev, Raja Indramani, Kala Raja, Raja Gandharva Rai and some others, who were then alive and took them back to Bengal(9).

Raja Sattrajit subsequently became the thanadar of Pandu and figured in several other engagements in the Assam Valley (10). King Pratap Singha suspected that he bribed some of the Ahom officers and ordered his arrest but he eluded capture. At last, when at Dhubri, he was arrested by the Moghul Commander and taken to Dacca where he was executed under orders of the Subadar (11). At this distance of time it seems rather a pity that a person who figured so prominently as an important Imperialist Commander and served in campaign after campaign in places far away from his native home should have met with such a tragic and ignoble end but there seems to be hardly any doubt that he was a traitor. Even Mirza Nathan, who was beholden to the Raja for several acts of sincere friendship and ready succour, has been compelled to mention

(8) According to the Buranjis the battle took place on Saturday the 15th Magh 1537 Śak equivalent to January-February 1616 A. D.—K.L.B

(9) Purani Assam Buranji p. 128.

(10) Two Portuguese Christian Missionaries named Stephen Cacella and John Cabral visited Pandu when Raja Sattrajit was there as "Pagan Commader of Mogor (Moghuls) against the Assanese (Assamese)."—Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Assia 1603-1721A.D. p. 123.

(11) Gaits History of Assam (second edition) p. 115.

something against him in the narrative.\* Other Muslim accounts as well as the Assamese *Buranjis* prove that he was a traitor by nature. The latter records contain the texts of correspondence passing between Imperialist Commanders and the Assamese Commanders and their King. These include a letter which Raja Sattrajit addressad to the Ahom King, Pratap Singha, after Mirza Nathan was driven out of *dakhinkul* (south bank of the Brahmaputra) by the Assamese forces. This letter was sent through two traders named Umar and Kanai. The text of this letter as published in the Purani Asam Buranji is practically the same as that published in the Kamrupar Buranji. It ran as follows :—

“ স্বস্তি গুণিগণ গুণার্ণব পৰম পবিত্র যশোৱাশিমণ্ডিত

দিগন্তবাধি পটলৌৎপাটল শ্ৰীশ্ৰীযুত মহাৰাজা প্রচণ্ড প্রতাপেশ্বৰ !

দোয়া সেলাম লেখনং কাৰ্য্যক আগে তোমাৰ কুশল হামেচা চাহো ; ফেৰ : হামাৰে মিয়াৰ খবৰ হোএগা ; আৰ তুমি এতবাৰ নগুজস্তেও আমাৰ বোখচো বোখ হোএ। শ্ৰীশ্ৰীযুত খুব মল্লিক ৬চৰণেত দৰগাতে মই সবচোৰ দেহঙ্গ। তোমাৰি খেজমতেত চাকৰি দোও কৰো হে ; অতএব ফিলজিমিল্লা ৰায়তেৰ খোচ হানি আক অধিকা লেখনা ভি হে পৰং উমৰ কানাই কহিনেক হাজিৰ আপনে কাজ গুজাৰ হাকিদ কা হোএ ইতি জিল কাজ শক ১৫৪১ মাহ ফাগুন তাং ১২। দোলচা ২০ কুৰি, লাহৰি ২০ কুৰি, পামক ১২ থান, চিট ৫০ থান, টাৰ ( তার ) ৪০ কুৰি, পোৱাল ২০ ধাৰ, লক্ষ ২ মোনা, জায়ফল ১ মোনা, সফেদ কাঠ ৪ সেৰ, লাল ২ সেৰ।” (Purani Assam Buranji p. 168).

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\* The Mirza mentions that when he quarrelled with Shaikh Kamal Raja Sattrajit conspired with Sumaru Kaith (The Mirza calls him Shumārūyud Kaith). As a result Sumaru Kaith induced the Assamese forces to attack Hungrabari fort occupied by the Moghuls during the temporary absence of Mirza Nathan. The Assamese captured the fort killing seven hundred men of the cavalry and infantry of the Mirza. Subsequently Raja Sattrajit conspired with Kansa Nārāyan and Hardeo Chutia and induced them to attack. Dāngār Dev, a chief of the Dākhinkul friendly to the Moghuls. Dāngār Dev was defeated and killed. His wives then observed *Suttee* but Nathan gave the Jagir to the minor son of Dāngār Dev.--K. L. B.

The above letter is in mixed Assamese, Bengali and Persian language which was probably used in those days in correspondence between Assam and Bengal. King Pratap Singha believed this letter to be sincere and sent through Kamal Lochan Katakī (envoy) a silver *jhari* (pitcher) with a spout of gold. The queen also sent to the Rajas' harem a suit of silk *Biha-Mekhela* (Assamese lady's dress) <sup>(12)</sup>. Subsequently the Raja sent his minor son, in charge of a nurse, to make obeisance to the Ahom King on his behalf. On this occasion the King presented to the Raja's minor son one elephant and two thousand silver coins <sup>(13)</sup>. It was after this that Pratap Singha suspected the treachery of the Raja and ordered his arrest.

It appears that, as late as the seventeenth century, heated elephants were almost indispensable in warfare. They were used to break through forts and palisades and in traversing thick impenetrable grass jungles, as in Assam, they, marching in advance, trampled the reeds and grasses and cleared an avenue for the infantry to pass through. Often elephants fought with elephants and horsemen with horsemen. The Moghul officers generally rode on horseback. Foot-soldiers often cut the legs of horses to bring down mounted warriors. Even after the wide use of firearms, bows and arrows and spears continued to be used. In hand to hand fighting shields and armours were used for protection and even horses and elephants were covered with steel armours. The *Thatari* or *gardon* was a big wheel or chariot under the cover of which elephants attacked forts. Both in Bengal and Assam war-boats played an important part in the campaigns. These boats carried artillery and other heavy materials which foot-soldiers could not carry. They were used also for crossing troops and horses. As means of transport in a road-less country the boats were indispensable. The river Brahmaputra was the main highway

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(12) Purani Asam Buranji p. 169.

(13) *Ibid.*



in Assam along which the Muslim invaders could march into the country and the important Assamese forts or strongholds were on the banks of this river such as those at Hajo, Pandu, Saraighat, Bhorori, Samdhara, Kaliabar, Sola, etc. The Imperial forces included cavalry but the Koch and the Ahom forces had none ; but in spite of this deficiency the latter often defeated the former.

The narrative gives us a glimpse of the rotten system of eunuchs and all that it stands for. It is surprising that the Mirza makes no attempt to conceal the existence of the vice but rather gives us to understand that he was himself addicted to it and that it was common among the soldiery. Another custom to which the translator Dr. Borah refers is that of killing the wives and daughters in order to prevent them falling into the hands of enemies. According to Dr. Borah the Muhammadans copied the practice from the Rajputs but as far as we know the Rajput custom of *jauhar* was somewhat different. Professor K. T. Shah gives the origin of this custom in the following extract from his book "The splendour that was Ind":—"With one who has thrown away his sword, with one fallen, with one yielding, with women and one bearing the name of a woman or with a low vulgar fellow—with all these, I do not battle. So said the mighty Bhishma \* \* \* and this code of the warriors' honour was obeyed wherever Aryan chivalry was understood and practised. When however foes began to swarm in the country who could not understand or could not respect these refinements of war's high etiquette the valiant vanquished marked their contempt of their conquerors by the awful rites of *jauhar*. Rather than fall into the hands of these barbarians women mounted the funeral pyre with every token of rejoicing ; and their men, now safe from the sting of any outrage on their beloved, rushed out with one single thought—to kill and be killed—without quarter asked or offered." The wives and daughters of the Muslim nobles, on the other hand, were butchered in cold blood. Hussain Khan, Zamindar of

Baniyachang in Sylhet, who had been imprisoned by Islam Khan at Dacca, escaped from captivity and on his return to Baniyachang his first act was to kill "all his wives and daughters and those of his brother." and thus "freed from care" he made arrangements to resist the Moghuls. At length after a good deal of fight he was again captured and put into prison but not killed. When Usman was killed in battle his dead body was carried to Uhar where the Afghans elected his son Mumriz as their chief but still the daughters and women of the harem of Usman "were put to the sword in a secret chamber of the house." Was not this butchering unnecessary and uncalled for? When the Assamese Commander Rajkhowa, together with Sumaru Barkaith, surrounded Mirza Nathan and his army, the Mirza first sent away the women of his harem on the back of elephants but as there were no conveyances left to carry his servants (khidmatgaran) he ordered that they should perform *jowhar* and accordingly "fifty to eighty persons of the Mirza's *mahal* (probably most of them were either women or eunuchs) performed *jowhar*." The Mirza however himself fled and escaped. The Muslim custom may have been originally copied from the Rajputs but such conduct, as that of the Mirza, had no analogy with the Rajput custom.

The publication of the narrative has enabled us to appreciate properly the value of the resistance offered by the various leaders and chiefs of Kamrup in contributing to the ultimate failure of the Moghul expedition into Kamrup and Assam. The Guerilla warfare started by Sanatan in the *uttarkul* and by Parsuram, Sumaru Kayeth, Jadu Nayak, Mamu Govinda and the 18 hill rajas in the *Dākhinkul* kept a large part of the Imperialist forces engaged with them. These valiant and patriotic leaders, whose heroism and able military leadership the Mirza has acknowledged, were therefore in no small measure responsible for the ultimate reverse of the Imperialists and it was to recover the prestige lost in this reverse and also to

retalliate the subsequent plundering raids carried on by the Assamese, almost as far as Dacca itself, that the Emperor despatched Mir Jumla, with a large host, to conquer Assam. The Chronicler of that expedition was Shihabud-Din-Talish and the name of the narrative is Fathiya-i-Ibriyah. The publication of an English translation of this narrative also by Dr. Borah is in contemplation. It is hoped that the Assam Government will find the necessary money for this purpose. The narrative under review, which deals mainly with the history of Bengal during a very eventful period, has been published entirely at the cost of the Government of Assam, thanks to the interest taken by the late Sir Michael Keane to whom the work has been most appropriately dedicated. It is indeed very painful to all of us that he suddenly died shortly after the publication of these two volumes which, let us hope, will help to keep his memory alive in Assam.

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## HAYAGRIVA-WORSHIP IN ASSAM

(BY JOGENDRA CHANDRA GHOSH)

Hayagrīva is the name of a *avatāra* or incarnation of Viṣṇu. The horse-cult is a very ancient one, which is traced to the *Ryveda* in Dadhikrā or the god Agni in the type of a horse. He is said to have assumed the shape of a horse and destroyed the Asuras. Although Hayagrīva is not one among the ten well-known *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, namely, Matsya (Fish), Kūrma (Tortoise), Varāha (Boar), Nṛsimha (Man-lion), Vāmana (Dwarf), Paraśurāma, Rāma, Valarāma, Buddha and the yet-to-come Kalkī, he is found mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and in many *Purānas*.

As regards the origin of this *Avatāra*, the *Mahābhārata* (Śānti-P., ch. 349) says that at one time while Viṣṇu was sleeping and Brahmā was on the lotus, issued out of the

naval of Viṣṇu, two demons, named Madhu and Kaiṭabha, took away the *Vedas* from Brahmā and went away to Rasātala. Brahmā, being much agrieved at this, awoke Viṣṇu and prayed for the recovery of the *Vedas*. Viṣṇu assumed the Hayagrīva form and recovered the *Vedas* and made them over to Brahmā. He then went to sleep in the north-east corner of the great sea in his Hayagrīva form. The demons came to him and invited him to a fight in which they were killed. According to some accounts it was the Asura Hayagrīva who stole away the *Vedas*, which was recovered from him by Viṣṇu. The *Mahābhārata* (*Ibid*) also says that the Pañcālā king received his realm by worshipping this Hayagrīva form of Viṣṇu. According to the *Matsya-Purāṇa* (ch. 53) the Hayagrīva *avatāra* preceded the Matsya *avatāra*, the first of the ten *avatāras*, enumerated above. It says that when the worlds were burnt down, Viṣṇu in the form of a horse re-compiled the four *vedas*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Nyāya-vistara*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Dharma-Sāstras*. It appears from these statements that the Hayagrīva *avatāra* originated for the revival of the Vedic religion in the north-east quarter, where it was subverted by the Jaina and Buddhist religions.

A very late account of the origin of the Hayagrīva-form of Viṣṇu is found in chapters XIV-XV of the *Dharmāraṇya-khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda-purāṇa*. It says that at one time the gods wanted to perform a great sacrifice on earth, in which they desired to invite Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa could not be found anywhere. Bṛhaspati then told the gods where Kṛṣṇa could be found. The gods went to him and found him absorbed in deep meditation, with his bow in his arm. The gods failing to bring him to senses, requested some ants, present there, to eat away the string of the bow. The chord being cut, struck Viṣṇu and sundered his head, which at once went to heaven. The gods then requisitioned the help of Viṣvakarmā to put a head on the body of Viṣṇu. It was then midday. He found handy

the horses of the Sun and cut off one of their heads and joined it to the body of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu thus became Hayagrīva or horse-headed. He performed austerities in Dharmāranya (Sitapur district in U. P.) and was relieved of his horse-head and regained his former head and the place became a great *ṭṭhā*. This story seems to be a later concoction by the Mōḍha Brāhmins to add importance to their place of Dharmāranya-kṣetra. It is based on the Dadhica story as given by Sāyana on the *R̥gveda*, I. 116. 12.

The *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* says : "In Bhadrāśva Viṣṇu is figured with a horse's head, in Bhārata as a tortoise, in Ketumāla as a boar, and in the north as a fish, (ch. LV. v. 31). It further says :—(ch. LIV. v. ii) :— (In Bhadrāśva) god Janārdana has a horse's head and forearms resembling a horse's and he has three eyes." The *Vāmana-purāṇa*, a later compilation speaking of the different places of the different forms of Vāmana, says that the Hayaśīra is on the river Kṛṣṇā, Hayagrīva in Mahodoya (Kanauj). The *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* (IX. ch. 2) supports the statement of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, as given above. It says that in Bhadrāśva, Viṣṇu is Hayaśīra, i. e., with the head of a horse, in Ketumāla he is in the form of a boar, in Bhārata, he has assumed the form of a tortoise, in Kuru the form of a fish, while he will be found in Viśvārūpa form everywhere

Now let us see where this Bhadrāśva varṣa or the sub-continent of Bhadrāśva has been placed by the epics and the *purāṇas*, in their description of the *Bhuvana-kośa* or the world cosmogony. The world is said to be consisting of seven *dvīpas* or islands, of which Jambu-dvīpa is at the centre. The mount Meru is at the centre of this Jambu-dvīpa, round which lies the sub-continent of Ilāvṛta. To the east of this are the *Viṣkumbha* or sub-adjacent mount Mandara and the sub-continent Bhadrāśva. Jaṭhara and Devakūṭa are the two eastern *maryādā* or boundary mountains. One of the principal rivers

of this eastern sub-continent of Bhadrās̥va is Sītā (Viṣṇu-purāṇa, ch. II. ch. 3 and *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, ch. 55 & 57). Two of the principal mountains to the east of Mandara are Maṇi and Mahānīla or Nīla (*Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, ch. 56 and *Vāyu-purāṇa*, ch. 36). This Mandara mountain in the east is identified with the Mandara hill of the Bhagalpur district in Behar. In the accounts of Bhāratavarṣa, as given in chapter 58 of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, among others the mount Mandara and the river Karatoyā and the country Prāgjyotiṣa have been included within Bhāratavarṣa. But in the next chapter on *Kūrmaniveśana*, the countries of Prāgjyotiṣa and the Lauhitya have been included in it. The *Vāyu-purāṇa* (ch. 45) also includes these and the river Lohita in it. In Buddhist accounts Bhadrās̥va is replaced by the name of Pūrva-Videha (Watters—*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. I. pp. 31-36). It thus appears that the western border of Bhadrās̥va fluctuated from the east of Videha or Mithilā to the river Lohita or the Brahmaputra. The *Vāyu-purāṇa* (ch. 36, vs. 23-25) attributes the name of Bhadrās̥va to the white horse of Viṣṇu. Apparently this is a reference to his Hayagrīva form there.

The *Kālikā-purāṇa* (chs. 76 ff.) gives an account of Kāmarūpa, which extends as far west as the river Karatoyā in the Bogra district, Bengal. Among others it contains the mountains named Maṇikūṭa and Nīla-parvata and the rivers Sītā and Lauhitya. On the Maṇikūṭa is Hayagrīva Viṣṇu and on the mount Nīla is situated the well-known Kāmākhyā-pīṭha. Ablution in the Sītā is the month of Caitra is as much efficacious as the bathing in the Ganges. The Sītā of the Bhadrās̥va-varṣa is said to be a stream of the Ganges (*Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, ch. 87). The River Lauhitya passes through the Maṇikūṭa and the Gandhamādana, a mountain of Bhāratavarṣa. These accounts go to show that Kāmarūpa formed a part of Bhadrās̥va. We do not know when the *Kālikā-purāṇa* was composed, but it is earlier than the thirteenth century, for

Hemādri (c. 1260-1309 A. D.) in his *Vratakhanda* of the *Caturvarga-cintāmaṇi* (ch. I, p. 22, Bib. Ind. series) quotes it.

It is clear that when the *Bhuvanakoṣa-varṇana* of the *Purāṇas* recorded the Hayagrīva-form of Viṣṇu in the *Bhadrāśva-varṇa*, Hayagrīva-worship in that sub-continent was well-established. Now this description of the world cosmogony is much earlier than the extant *Purāṇas*. In the *Mārkaṇḍeya* as well as in many other *Purāṇas*, *Prāgjyotiṣa* has been included in *Bhāratavarṇa*, but not *Kāmarūpa*. But *Kāmarūpa* was well-known in the time of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa* is evident from the fact that it has been mentioned twice (chs. 67 & 110). Pargiter in the Introduction (p. xx) to his translation of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa* says this portion i. e. chapters 45-81 and 93-136 were 'very probably in existence in the third century and perhaps earlier'. It thus appears that the *Bhuvanakoṣa* portion of the *Purāṇas* is taken from much earlier record. The Hayagrīva-worship in Assam, therefore, in all probability, existed earlier than the Christian era. Even today there is a temple of Hayagrīva-Mādhava in Hajo, a station fourteen miles north-west of Gauhati. It bears an inscription to the effect that this temple on the *Maṇikūṭa* was rebuilt in Śaka 1505 by king Raghudeva-Nārāyaṇa. We have seen that the *Kālikā-Purāṇa* also mentions Hayagrīva on the *Maṇikūṭa*. So Hayagrīva-worship at Hajo must have been very old but how old we are not in a position to say. The *Harivamśa* (*Viṣṇuparva*, ch. 64) says that Śrīkṛṣṇa, after having killed Naraka, Nisunda and Hayagrīva, went to the *Maṇiparvata*, where Naraka, kept confined the daughters of the *Gandharva* and *Asura* chiefs. The *Kālikā-purāṇa* says that Viṣṇu, in his Hayagrīva-form killed the asura Hayagrīva on this *Maṇikūṭa*. This gives some idea of the antiquity of the Hayagrīva image of Hajo. It would be of interest, if somebody publishes an account of this Hayagrīva.

We have seen above how Viṣṇu, in his Hayagrīva *avatarā* recovered the *Vedas* from the demons *Madhu* and

Kaitabha. According to the *Matsya-purāṇa* (ch. 49) the Hayagrīva *avalāra* will have horse's head, with śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and Veda in his hands. He will have his left foot on Śeṣa-nāga and the right on the back of tortoise. This very ancient worship shows that Vedic religion was re-introduced in Assam long before the first century A. D. Hayagrīva is not only a god of the Brāhmanists, but also of the Buddhists. He is a god of knowledge. We hear that Hayagrīva at Hajo is worshipped by the followers of both the religions. There is nothing to be wondered at this. The Hayagrīva-cult spread over China and Japan. In the *Mahābhārata* (Śānti-parva, ch. 348) Viṣṇu is called *Prāgjyotiṣa-jyeṣṭha*. We do not know what it indicates, and what relationship with Prāgjyotiṣa, this epithet refers to. The mode of Hayagrīva-worship as given in the *Gaḍura purāṇa* (ch. 34) does not seem to be purely Pauranic, but a mixture of Pauranic and Tāntric worship. This may have some connection with the Buddhistic Mantrayāna. The *Padmapurāṇa*, *Paṭālakhaṇḍa* (ch. 47, v. 36, Baṅgabāṣī ed.) has described the Hayagrīva Śālagrāma. This speaks for the popularity of the Hayagrīva-worship. The Manuscript Libraries of Southern India contain a good deal of literature on Hayagrīva. R. Van Gulik has given much information in *The Mantrayanic Aspect of Horse-cult in China & Japan*, Leiden, 1935.

Some explanation seems necessary as to how Kāmarūpa came to be included within Bhadrāsava-varsa, while Prāgjyotiṣa has been mentioned as forming a part of Bhāratavarṣa. We think that the empire of Prāgjyotiṣa lay in both the Varsas, round about the eastern sea, which formed the eastern boundary of Bhāratavarṣa. Bhagalutta has been called पूर्वसागर-वासी (महामारत, उद्योगपर्व, चतुर्थोऽध्याय). The provinces on the western coast of this Eastern Sea was in Bhāratavarṣa, while those on the east coast lay in Bhadrāsavarṣa. The Bay of Bengal is generally considered to be the Eastern Sea. In the *Matsyapurāṇa*



(Ch. 121, V. 51) the Ganges is said to have entered the **दक्षिणोदधि** । So the Bay of Bengal to which the Ganges flows can not be the Eastern sea. The sea must be to the north of the Bay of Bengal. It must be the sea to which flowed the Lohita river. There is evidence to show that eastern Mymensing was once under a sea. Bakhtiyar also found a sea there. The eastern provinces of the Prāgjyotiṣa empire, at a later period, probably assumed the name of Kāmarūpa. This Eastern sea might be the **लोहित सागर** mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa, Ch. 40, v. 37). Nothing can be made out about the position of the **लोहितोदधि** mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* (Vanaparva, Ch. 226, V. 27).

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## SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PORTUGUESE TRAVELLERS IN ASSAM.

(BY K. L. BARUA.)

It is recorded in Sir Edward Gait's "History of Assam" that about the year 1635 A. D., when the Ahom King Pratap Singha was still engaged in warfare with the Moghuls in Dakhinkul, Pandu, Hajo, Sualkusi, Agiathuti, Saraighat and other places, all within the present district of Kamrup, a *Feringhi*, probably a Portuguese, belonging to one of the Moghul outposts, who had gone off to shoot birds, was captured by the Assamese and taken before the King. It is not stated how the Ahom king dealt with this captive but Gait writes that this is the first instance recorded of a European entering Ahom territory. The district of Kamrup was then the bone of contention between the Assamese and the Moghuls and actually therefore this district belonged to neither party about this time. Consequently Gait is perhaps correct in stating that the *Feringhi* sent to Garhgaon, the Ahom capital, was the first European to set his foot in Upper Assam. As a matter of fact however, in the year 1626 A. D., or nine years before the capture of the *Feringhi*, referred to by Gait, two Portuguese Jesuit travellers

viz Father Stephen Cacella and Father John Cabral, came to Pandu and Hajo, searching for a route to Potente (Bhotanta or Bhutan). This appears from Stephen Cacella's letter dated the 4th October 1627, written from Cambirasi in Bhutan. This letter has been published in a book named "Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia" by C. Wessels, S. J. The book was published in 1924.

These two travellers left Hugli (Golim) on the 2nd August 1626 and reached Dacca on the 12th August. They set out from Dacca on the 5th September by boat and reached Pandu on the 26th of the same month. After a few days stay at Pandu they left by road to Hajo. They left Hajo on the 8th October and reached Koch-Bihar on the 21st October. They had to wait there till the 21st February 1627 when they left for Bhutan.

At Dacca, which was then the headquarters of the Moghul Subadar, they were at once seized but were released after twelve days. During the boat journey from Dacca to Pandu they passed through as many as sixty *chokis* or custom-houses at each of which they had to pay toll. The various places visited by the travellers have been named in Cacella's letter in a peculiar Portuguese way but they evidently could not remember the name of the Brahmaputra which is called the "beautiful river of Cocho."

The following extract from Father Stephen Cacella's letter, which Wessels publishes, without an English translation, will be found interesting :—

"With the intention of getting wood and making our departure for Cocho <sup>(1)</sup> we came accompanied by people whom George De Souza had also sent for this purpose. This helped

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(1) The eastern and the western Koch Kingdoms were known as Koch-Hajo and Koch-Bihar respectively. In Stephen Cacella's letter Koch-Hajo is called Cocho and Koch-Bihar is called Biar.

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us very much to pass the *chokis*, some sixty in number, which served as custom-houses where the suit is examined and a toll is paid. Up to Azo (Hajo) the *chokis* are on cool and bracing rivers with rich habitation on either banks.

Azo is the principal city and the capital of the kingdom of Cocho, a large country, very populous and rich where Liquinane (Lakshminārāyan) king of Cocho, who is now dead, used to reside. The Nababo of Mogor (Moghul), to whom the country pays tribute, also resides there. We passed the town and arrived at Pando (Pandu) where Raja Satargit (Satrajit) of Busna (Blusana) the Pagan Commander-in-Chief of Mogor against the Assanes (Assamese) has his seat. Pando is not a very large country but it is thickly populated. It does not extend far into the interior but stretches along the beautiful river of Cocho and is the cause of the war which they continually have with the Assanes who border on Pando, the last district of the kingdom in that direction<sup>(2)</sup>. Raja Satargit received us with great kindness honouring us in the midst of a great multitude and his retinue of 300 Mogor cavalry who always accompany him.

Having declared our intention that the reason of our coming was to proceed to Cathay<sup>(3)</sup> and presented the letters which we had brought, we obtained the information that there was no one who had any knowledge of this kingdom (Cathay)

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(2) This indicates that the temple of Kāmākhyā and the town of Gauhati were then in the hands of the Assamese.

(3) The great empire in Central Asia ruled over by Zenghis Khan and Kublai Khan. Portuguese Missionaries introduced Christianity here about the thirteenth century and in the fourteenth century the number of Catholic Christians increased to such an extent as to justify the appointment of an Archbishop of Cambaluc (Khan-Balig or the Khan's town) the capital.

except a Moor, (4) an important person, who told us that it lay beyond a town called Cascar (Kashghar) through which one passes into it and that he knew of no road leading to it from Cocho but that we would find one after crossing the mountains of Potente (Bhotanta or Bhutan) (5). Having considered the manner in which we could enter the kingdom of Potente Raja Satargit proposed that we should consult Liquinarane, king of Cocho at Azo who, as king of the country, knew more of it and was well acquainted with the people who came down into his country by several gates. Not wishing that we should go alone Satargit insisted on presenting us personally to Liquinarane and from there seeing us off to our destination. We rode on beautiful horses which were well harnessed and, on the day following our arrival at Ajo we went with Satargit to visit the king (6).

The generosity of this Raja of Busna, the honours with which we were treated and the care bestowed in our cause—all these speak of the pomp and majesty of these Rajas according to what one sees of many in India. They live well and have royal diginty. They are not naked people but well-dressed and grave both on foot and on horse-back ; especially Raja

(4) The Moor was probably a soldier in the Moghul army.

(5) This shows the adventurous spirit of the Portuguese travellers. They were prepared to make a short cut to Cathay through the Himalayas and Tibet.

(6) Hajo was then on the river Brahmaputra, The travellers in the course of their boat journey up to Pandu simply "passed the town" but did not evidently stop there. It was on the North bank of the river whereas Pandu is on the South bank, some six miles towards the East. It is not understood why it was necessary to ride on horses to go to Hajo when a boat journey down the river was so easy. Perhaps the travellers wanted to see the interior of the country. They must have then proceeded by road as far as Palashbari or Garal and thence crossed by boat.

Satargit who owing to his knowledge which is necessary in the whole of this kingdom and through his liberality with which he disposes of his income amounting to about 200,000 *tangas* (7) for the benefit of the people, is much esteemed as we saw at Azo where he was cheered in the streets as though he was their king.

To speak to king Liquinarane we had to pass through three large courts, separated from each other by strong gates and surrounded by roomy verandas which were well lit and which were crowded with people. The gates, which are guarded, are always closed. The last two had a large number of soldiers who served as a guard of the king always attending there in strict order being stationed according to each one's rank. They were so up to the mark and so well provided that one got the impression that they were on a battle-field. This was followed by a large and beautiful garden in the middle of which stood a well-decorated villa where the king awaited us. We were received with great kindness by him and after various questions concerning the kingdom of Portugal and of other countries he advised us to go to Biar (Koch-Bihar) where his son Gaburassa (8) ruled and thence to Potente through Runate (9) the farthest part of his dominions. We bade him farewell and took

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(7) 200,000 *tangas* would be approximately Rs. 12,500 in current exchange.

(8) According to Khan Chaulhury Amanat Ullah Ahmad, the author of "Koch-Biharer Itihas", *Gabur Shah* meant *Juvaraja* and that the terms *Gabur-Dewan* and *Gabur-Nazir* were also in use. The Assamese word *Gabhoru* is applied to a young grown up girl. In Koch-Bihar it was evidently applied to males also and corrupted into *Gabur* or *Gabru*. The *Gabur Shah* referred to here was Kumar Bir-Narayan who succeeded Lakshminarayan in the year 1627 A. D.

(9) Runate was the Portuguese rendering of Rangamati on the border of Bhutan within Koch territory. It is not to be confused with Rangamati near Dhubri.

the letters of recommendation to his son who was to help us in every way. He provided us liberally with travelling expenses which Raja Satargit also did far more handsomely for, besides sending us 9 pieces of silk with great apologies for being unable to show us by other means the great love he had for us, he sent a near relative of his to accompany us and gave us horses. He also sent a Brahman from his house with a letter to prince Gaburra. At last we parted, he to Pando and we to Biar.

The city of Biar, which is situated on the river, extends so wide that throughout its length and breadth it has a space of several miles thus affording a beautiful sight. Except for the low buildings which are very much like those of the other towns of Bengal there is nothing that is striking. The town is very populous and well provided both with what the country itself has and that which comes from Patna, Rajamal (Rajmahal) and Gouru (Gaur), by whose merchants it is visited. There are many bazars where everything that is produced in these countries is to be found and in particular Biar is noted for its fruits of every kind, especially its orange, which is better than what I have seen elsewhere in India. The Prince of Biar was not present when we arrived there because a few months before, disheartened by the floods which were caused by the river, he had removed to the interior near a tributary of the same river a place which before was called Colambarin. The Biar merchants were so eager to please their king and to establish the new town that when we arrived there it had already got ahead of Biar in the grandeur and regularity of its streets. We were well received and protected at Colambarin by order of the Prince who after knowing the reason of our coming, through the letters of the King, his father and Satargit offered to give us every help. We soon left for Runate, with his people, and there we found 7 or 8 persons whose sight corresponded to what we desired to find in our destination. We gathered what information they could give and they told us that there was

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no possibility of crossing the mountains at the season on account of the snow, wind and rain for which the place was notorious. However much we insisted the men could not be prevailed upon to attempt to cross the mountains and so we were obliged to wait for four months more in the kingdom of Biar.”

This narrative of Stephen Cacella contains a few particulars which require elucidation. Lakshminārāyan was king of the Western Koch Kingdom. How could he be at Hajo in 1626? The description of his quarters or rather palace in Hajo indicates that he was residing there for some years entrusting the administration of his own kingdom to his son. Father Wessels depending on Blochman, Gait and Hunter for correct dates assumes that Cacella's reference to Liquinarane was wrong and that in 1626 A. D. Birnārāyan was the king of Koch-Bihar who died in 1627 A. D. Further it is pointed out that “after Balinārāyan's flight to Assam the part of the country where Cacella was had not a king of its own”. It may be remembered that at one time both Parikhitarāyan and Lakshminārāyan were kept under restraint at Dical. This exasperated the people of Kamrup so much that they rose in rebellion in various places under several bold and patriotic leaders. Parikhitarāyan was never allowed to return to Kamrup although it is believed that Emperor Jahangir actually ordered his re-instatement on payment of a large tribute. It is said that he ultimately committed suicide at Allahābād. After the dismissal of Quasim Khan and appointment of Ibrahim Khan Fath Jang as Subadar of Bengal, Lakshminārāyan was allowed to return but he was attached to Shaikh Kamal, the leader of the Mughal army of occupation in Kamrup, stationed in Hajo as Shaikh Kamal had stood surety for the annual *peshkash*

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\* This English translation from old Portuguese has been prepared for me by Mr. J. Araujo, of the staff of the St. Edmund's College, Shillong. I am deeply grateful to him.—K. L. B.

of Rupees one lakh payable by the Raja to the Emperor. This is the cause of the enforced residence of Lakshminārāyan at Hajo where he evidently stayed till 1626 and in September of that year he met the Portuguese travellers there. According to the *Koch-Beharer Itihas* by Khan Chaudhury Amanat Ullah Ahmad, which is the latest authoritative work on the subject, Lakshminārāyan died in 1627 A. D. and was succeeded by his son Birnārāyan who ruled till 1632 and was succeeded by Prānārāyan. Lakshminārāyan was too weak and infirm to be able to give personally any military assistance to the Mughals. His cousin Madhusudan, Pasupati son of Madhusudan and Ramsingh son of Surya Gossain took part in several campaigns on the side of the Mughals. They were all hated as traitors by the people of Kamrup.

Cacella's reference to Raja Sattrajit as the "pagan Commander-in-Chief of Mogor against the Assamese" can not be correct. Sattrajit was then the Thanadar of Pandu. The Mughal Commander-in-Chief had his headquarters at Hajo and he was the "Nababo" mentioned by Cacella. Mughal Commanders like Mirza Nathan refused to acknowledge even Shaikh Kamal as the Commander-in-Chief. No one would have accepted Raja Sattrajit as the military leader. It appears that the travellers were mis-informed on the point. They evidently brought with them letters of introduction to Raja Sattrajit from some body in Bengal. It appears from the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* of Mirza Nathan that Nārāyan, a brother of Raja Sattrajit in Bhusana and Nārāyan's son were in league with the Feringhi leaders who were not quite friendly with the Moghuls<sup>(10)</sup>. This

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(10) It was probably this nephew of Raja Sattrajit (son of Nārāyan) who subsequently embraced Christianity and assumed the name Dom Antonie after baptism. A work in Bengali entitled "Brahmana-Roman Catholic Sambād" by Dom Antonio "a Bengali prince of Bhusana," edited by Prof. S. N. Sen, M.A., Ph.D., has just been published by the Calcutta University.



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explains the arrest of the travellers at Dacca and the very kindly treatment accorded to them by Raja Sattrajit. The travellers mention the "Nobabo" at Hajo but they never cared to see him. They would have never gone Hajo if Sattrajit had not advised them to consult Lakshminārāyan about the route to Bhutan. Thus it seems that Cacella's picture of Raja Sattrajit was somewhat overdrawn.

After leaving Koch-Bihar the travellers, with great difficulty, reached Bhutan where they met the Droma Raja (Dharma Raja) at Pargaon. Thence they went as far as Shigatse, in Tibet, where the Tashi Lama lived. They never reached Cathay. In March 1630 Cacella died at Shigatse and thereafter Father Cabral returned to Hugli. As remarked by Wessels, the lonely and forgotten grave of Cacella lies beyond the mountains with no one to pray over it "whilst even the memory of his daring enterprise has grown dim and has almost sunk into oblivion."

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